PROCEEDINGS OF THE SOCIETY

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

At the annual meeting of the Society on September 28, 1944, Sir Raphael Cilento, Kt., M.D., B.S., D.T.M. & H., F.R. San I., Barrister-at-law, delivered his presidential address, as follows:—

In most societies a presidential address can revolve round a number of happy generalisations, but the president of a Historical Society must go considerably further than that. He is expected to provide some evidence of an interest in recent historical matters, although it is true that a wider latitude is permitted him to include material of a general and hortative nature. If we consider the circumstances of the last century; or better, if we return to a consideration of the years 1840-45, we find, I think, considerable matter that is worth reference and record.

The years 1840 to 1845 inclusive were particularly important in the development of Australia and more especially so with regard to the early history of the Moreton Bay District of New South Wales as this area was then called. Prior to 1840 Government settlements had been established at Redbank, Cooper's Plains and Limestone (Ipswich) and a general store had been opened on the south side of the Brisbane River at what became known as the Russell Street crossing, though Brisbane Town was not officially declared open for free settlement until 1842. The first public sale of Moreton Bay land took place in Sydney in July of that year and it is interesting to recall that eight allotments in Queen Street were then sold, the highest price realised being £250.

In the same year a regular steamship service between Sydney and Brisbane by vessels of the Hunter River Steam Navigation Co. (later known as the A.S.N. Company) was inaugurated, though Brisbane was not gazetted as a port of entry and clearance until 1846.

It was in this same quinquennial period that the first influx of pastoralists to Moreton Bay took place, following upon the discovery of the Darling Downs by Allan Cunningham some years earlier. The fact that so long a period was allowed to elapse between the glowing reports made by Cunningham on the richness of these pastures and the first attempts to grasp such

golden opportunities has never been satisfactorily explained, but the fact remains that it was about the middle of 1840 (13 years later) when Patrick Leslie settled on Toolburra, forming the first sheep station in Queensland. A few months later Sibley and King had made homesteads on Clifton; Hodgson and Elliot on Eton Vale; Hughes and Isaac on Gowrie. Jimbour was taken up by the Bells in 1841, and in the same year pastoral settlement had captured all the suitable land on the Upper Brisbane, among the first in the field being the McConnels, the Mackenzies, the Bigges and the Balfours. The grazing lands on the Logan were thrown open for settlement in 1842; Tamrookum and Bromelton being the first stations formed, with Kerry, Teleman, Tabragalba and Nindooinbah a little later.

You will recall also the fact that this was a time rich in exploration. Leichhardt left Sydney in August 1844 for Port Essington on the northern edge of the Northern Territory, his first and only successful expedition. Fresh in many people's minds also will be the recollection that only a few weeks ago a memorial cairn was erected at Birdsville to mark the Sturt centenary in South-west Queensland.

Extravagance Brings Crisis

Actually this was also a period of financial crisis —from 1842 to 1844. Clement Hodgkinson in 1845 set down briefly the causes that produced it. After devoting several pages to the description of that mania for speculation in land which pervaded all classes of the community, he continues, in singularly arresting terms, as follows—

> "Another cause of the present involved state of affairs has been the boundless extravagance of all classes of the community, and the consequent enormous importation, in proportion to the population of New South Wales, of mere articles of luxury, such as carriages, jewellery, plate, the most expensive furniture, rare wines, liqueurs, etc. To this must be added the great consumption of imported articles which the colony was perfectly able to produce itself, such as hams, bacon, butter, cheese, beef, flour, wine, fruits, pickles, etc., etc. The fall in the price of wool, and the cessation of immigration of people of capital to Australia, assisted materially in producing the present depression."

The discovery of copper and gold produced a magic change in our fortunes at that epoch, but though they are significant in themselves, more important are the later signs of economic progress which were seen during the next twenty years in the first manufacture of tweed, the initiation of meat preservation, the commencement of iron smelting, and the beginning of the pearl shell industry—to mention only a few.

There were, of course, earlier and later depressions equally, or even more severe, in the history of Queensland and Australia. The first of them was during those difficult years from the first settlement in 1788 to 1801. Many will remember the depression of 1888 to 1894, and all will remember the great depression of 1929 to 1934.

The first of them all (1788-1801) was very largely a matter of semi-starvation or irregular food supplies. Great Britain was then at war with France and Spain, and Australia was saved from collapse by the fact that the war itself drove whalers from their South American vantage points to bases on our eastern coasts, and they established here an industry that was—and might perhaps be still—a tremendous asset. The Government of the time initiated—as Government ventures which yielded shortly to private enterprise—the growth of corn, hemp, flax, grapes, and hops; the farming, and even the free distribution of cattle, sheep, pigs, and goats; the institution of fisheries; the beginning of brick-making, and of the trade in wool, coal, wood, and other industries and products. The zeal of Governor King dispelled the fear of bankruptcy in five years. When he came, three-quarters of the colonists were State-fed; when he left, three-quarters fed themselves and provided a surplus; while the remainder paid in timber, coal and other products, for much of what they ate.

In the generation that followed the depression of 1842–5, all Australia was actually consolidated towards unity and security by the establishment of easier means of inter-communication—the overland route between Sydney and Adelaide; the improvement of those between Sydney and Melbourne; the beginning of the first of the railways that in a few years linked the important local centres; the provision of telegraphs and cables; the institution of responsible government in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tas-

mania, with manhood suffrage and vote by ballot as two of its earliest works; and so forth.

It was, again, gold and closer settlement that mainly met the crisis of 1888 to 1893, and that produced in 1898, as one result of an enormous opening up of the country, the first true surplus of wheat for export. It resulted ultimately, too, in the federation of the States to form an autonomous Commonwealth in 1900–1.

In the same period, there came into our experience those more doubtful evidences of experimental idealism which to-day are attracting such serious consideration and criticism. The decade 1895 to 1905 saw the first institution and growth of land and income taxes, and of invalid and old-age pensions; the first of the long series of tariff revisions; and the first marked growth of governmental intervention in humanitarian projects.

But this is beyond the question. The significant fact is that each crisis in Australian history has been weathered by the exploitation of new possibilities in the production of foods and metals, and the seeking out of new markets accompanied by somewhat haphazard endeavours in land subdivision, etc.

Decline of Population

At every critical stage of our development, our outstanding disability has been a shortage of population. It is for that reason that the decline of the population at the present time is the most serious and significant feature of our short history.

History is the story of mankind; without men there is obviously no story. It is said that the country that is not interested in its past has no future; but the race that has no children has no future: it is living under a suspended sentence of death.

We look back to-day 100 years to a story of achievement in the face of difficulties—when, as a matter of fact, every new difficulty called out all that was best in the race, and stimulated it to establish itself even more securely in this most recent of the continents. But unless, during the next two generations, our population can increase with the same speed as that with which it has decreased during the last two

generations, there will be in this land at the end of a century no more of us as a free race than a mere memory.

It is not, of course, that this problem affects us alone: it affects all the nations of our own particular civilisation, and it is not the first time in history that this problem has arisen. It is a problem that is inseparable from what ancient philosophers called the "Era of Contending States" which always follows what has been called an "Augustan age," of great transitional development. What do these terms mean from a historical point of view?

We have much to learn from ancient civilisation, and history has preserved for us, in the most intriguing way, records of situations so similar to our own, that we might perhaps be able to gain something from the study of their causes and their attempts at correction. No matter can be more vital to the white race at the present day.

Over and over again in history from the days of primitive savagery onwards, there has grown up some warrior race, conquering the neighbouring peoples and bringing them under one feudal sway. The warrior king and his barons have gradually been forced to permit the first growths of liberty and representative government, with a corresponding tremendous upgrowth in national development. Then has come the inevitable period when liberty runs riot and becomes a formless license, as extreme in its way as the original despotisms; and finally there has always come the stage when the people of the race themselves become disillusioned, lacking in enterprise and initiative, and, though crowded into cities, lacking also the virtues of citizenship. Thereafter they wait until some new and primitive race brings them into subjection.

Ancient Civilisations

Some of the civilisations that have followed this course had reached a very high degree of intellectual development and technical skill. I need only instance the ancient civilisation of Egypt, of China, of India, of ancient Greece, and of ancient Rome. Separated by race, living at the opposite extremes of the earth, living at different ages and stages, the pattern of their history is nevertheless absolutely similar, so that one

might almost write it down and call it the "life story of civilisation"—draw it as a graph and put one's finger at any time upon the point which our own civilisation has reached in its development.

One outstanding feature is that at that stage at which the population becomes frustrated and disillusioned, there appears always a massive decline in the birth rate, and in two or three generations the race is lost.

In every civilisation sudden increases in productivity derived from the application of the new forces of science, or derived from the labour of conquered countries, result in a great increase in wealth. They provide at the outset an enormous increase of population and they determine a tremendous flow of population towards some few central cities. With us it was the harnessed horse power of the machine that produced the present age, with its greatly increased wealth and great surplus of population. Its surplus of people made the colonisation of Australia possible.

Few people realise that the population of England in Queen Anne's reign (1702 to 1714) was about seven million—less than the population of Australia to-day. Only one-sixth of them—thirteen per cent—lived in the cities. By 1800 it had reached eleven millions and the percentage in towns was twenty-six per cent. In 1925, an estimate was made of all the towns in England with more than 25,000 people. There were 105 of them, and 60 of them had actually come into being since 1825.

Overcrowded Cities

What shall we think of Australia where not 13 per cent., not 26 per cent., but 64.18 per cent. of our population is in a few cities and large towns, and where the capital cities in each of the States, with the exception of Queensland and Tasmania, contain from 48 to 56 per cent. of the whole population of the corresponding State? The enormous development of cities produces all the problems that embitter party politics, and that are the bases of class consciousness. They are also the destroyers of population—is it any wonder that we find in Australia to-day those same tendencies to population decline that have been found in every other country at the same stage of her civilisation?

In ancient Egypt, 4550 years ago (i.e. about 2600 B.C.), at the time of what is known as the "Great Social Revolution," when the masses of the "city-states" overturned the existing order, but had not themselves the capacity to take advantage of the power that they had drawn into their own hands, we are startled to read in fragments from the melancholy "Admonitions of the scribe Ipuwer": "Women became barren, for the Creator fashions men no more by reason of the distressed state of the land. The established order of old has vanished and the land has wilted like uprooted flax. Would that there might be an end of all mankind, that conception and birth should utterly fail!" And, to a large extent, they did. Disillusionment did the work it always does.

You will remember the classic passage from the Greek writer Polybius, when, 2200 years ago, ancient Greece had fallen into a state of administrative chaos through the abuse of liberty and the decline of her administrative institutions. At that stage of her existence she was invaded and destroyed by what was then the young, virile republic of ancient Rome (149 B.C.) and Polybius, in the history he wrote during the eighteen years that he and his dwindling deputation waited in Italy for the conquering Senate of Rome to pronounce its haughty will regarding the future fate of Greece, said:

> "In our time all Greece was visited by a dearth of children and generally a decay of population owing to which the cities have become denuded of inhabitants and the land waste; though there were no long-continued wars or serious pestilences among us . . . This evil grew upon us rapidly and without attracting attention by our people becoming perverted to a passion for show and money and the pleasures of an idle life, and accordingly either not marrying at all, or, if they did, many refusing to rear children that were born, or at most, one or two for the sake of leaving them well off or bringing them up in luxury, and the evil soon spread rapidly but imperceptibly. For when there are only one or two sons it is evident that if war or pestilence carries off those, the house must be left without any heir; and like failing swarms of bees, little by little, the cities become sparsely inhabited and weak. On this subject there is no

need to ask the gods how we are to be relieved from such a curse; for anyone in the world will tell you that it is by the people themselves, if possible, changing their objects of ambition; or if that cannot be done, by passing laws for the preservation of infants."

He went on to show that what had been the fate of Greece would ultimately be the fate of Rome also, as indeed 500 years later it was, and of that particular catastrophe we have very full records.

With the great conquests of Rome, masses of cheap labour were for three centuries brought into the city, which grew enormously. Cheap labour spread also throughout the whole of the provinces, where a great number of large enterprises were farmed out by the State. The local free labourer was soon excluded by the cheaper labour of the imported slave.

Economic Insecurity

The thing that kills any population is economic insecurity and fear of the future—fear of economic insecurity amongst those who have known security once, and fear of the future among those who are anxious about the present.

Polybius stated that the people were "perverted by a passion for show." Arséne Dumont wrote up the same idea under the heading of "social capillarity" fifty years ago. Dumont held that the fatal factor in the dissolution of civilisations, whether they call themselves democracies or anything else, is the development of the cult of "everyman for himself." This principle he said, manifests itself in a great variety of social phenomena, the most important of which are the decay of family life and of patriotic feeling. He called this principle "social capillarity"—the tendency of the more intelligent members of the community to soak towards the city as water soaks towards a sponge, and to strive for advancement in the social scale. The more administration is centralised, the greater this danger becomes. Dumont took the public service of France in the 1880's as his example. The ideal of all Frenchmen, he said, was a career as a government official, and the ideal of all officials was advancement in the public service pyramid from the masses at the base to the splendid isolation of the top. "Ici," he said, "comme sur toutes les routes d'ambition, pour monter vite et haut,

il ne faut pas s'embarrasser de bagages." The official has to keep up appearances. He and his wife must take a leading part in the social life of the district; but if his wife stays at home absorbed in the care of a large family, everyone will regard her husband as a man without a future and they will be right: under such social circumstances he will not have a future in the political and social sense. When a so-called man of the world has been advanced, everyone thinks he has aspired to his proper place; when a man impoverished by the cost of rearing a large family is left to vegetate in a inferior position, everyone thinks that he too has reached his proper place. The ambitious peasant sends his son to Paris or to some large town to become a white-collared worker; men seek for themselves and their sons a career that offers prospects of advancement in the social scale and security for the family—there must be no sliding down the ladder. The son must go higher than his father. So the birthrate among labourers increases up to a maximum with the basic wage; but in the white-collared worker class it falls below it and does not rise again until the income is £780 per annum or over.

Craving for Pleasures

Social capillarity operates in the sphere of pleasure as well as business. Modern civilisation offers unlimited sources of enjoyment in art, travel, athletics, sport, social entertainment, interests of all kinds—there are endless opportunities for pleasurable expenditure, an endless number of interesting things calling aloud with all the appeal of modern advertisement for money to be spent on them. The greater the intensity of this appeal, and the wider spread the newspapers and radios that advocate it, the stronger will be the force of Dumont's social capillarity and the weaker will be the fertility of the race. Dumont found, as every other observer has found, that in the districts where the people were too poor for any hope of social advancement and too remote from the cities to feel their pull, fertility was high, but in the districts where the standards of comfort and intelligence were those of the city, fertility was low, and the more costly the standard the lower the fertility.

Not all restriction of birthrate is either unworthy or completely selfish. A man may want to get on not

for his own sake but for the sake of his family. He may personally scrimp and save. "A man may find his good time in living laborious days so that his children may amuse themselves with games he never had the time or money to learn; nor is the fact of getting on or the fact of having a good time, provided one pays one's way, regarded as anti-social conduct when society confers its most glittering prizes upon those who get on."

While that is the case, it is useless, as they found in ancient Rome, to deplore (as Tacitus did) a decline in private and public morals; or to deplore a loss of national, civic and family sense. It was useless for Minucius Felix or Juvenal or other Roman writers to comment bitingly on the universal practice of abortion and infanticide, or for Pliny to excuse it as the sad effects of necessity, or for governments to make almost desperate marriage and inheritance laws with penalties for celibacy or childlessness. For, while it was an advantage to be childless, the life blood of the nation continued to drain steadily away through its overgrown cities.

Real and Imaginary Diseases

Comparisons between ancient Rome and modern Australia are definitely too close for comfort. For example, there was a curious medical feature obvious at that time just as at this. A constant threat to security or survival produces anxiety states and definite neuroses. City populations are especially prone to them and mob psychology multiplies new hysterical or neurotic tendencies. Science becomes suspect and every kind of quack flourishes in periods of disillusionment and insecurity. Here in Queensland thirty per cent. of our illnesses are nervous only—a big proportion of all people who go to doctors have only a nervous background for the majority of their illnesses—and if we compare this with the history of ancient Rome nothing is more curious than the discovery that it was also similarly preoccupied with its diseases, both real and imaginary. The whole Roman world in the last two centuries of its free existence was absorbed in morbid speculation.

As Friedlander points out, no racecourse charioteer and no theatre star had a greater "fan" following than Thessalos, the court-physician, who displaced Vettius Valens (himself the founder of a new school), to be in his turn dethroned by Crinas of Massilia, who

combined medical advice with a personal horoscope. Isn't that modern? There was an almost British attachment to the experimental comparison of purgatives, which became ever more expensive and better advertised. Public interest, as always, favoured every form of quackery, to the consequential lowering of all medical standards; and secret remedies vied with cosmetics as the most lucrative of business speculations. Isn't that like Hollywood?

The identity with modern reactions will be obvious. (It may be reinforced perhaps by the interesting fact that the broadcast radio advertisements for food and drugs of one great American "network" totalled 18 per cent. of its revenue in 1927, 56 per cent. of it in 1931, and 66 per cent. in 1935. In the last year, 20,783,000 dollars went over the air on this errand, as against 10,365,000 dollars in respect of all other items combined).

But the clinical diseases common in Rome are interesting indeed. They include many of those affections of mucous membranes and evidences of loss of tone or faulty metabolism so permanently associated with food deficiencies by the work of McCarrison and others. Of the four main specialties, tuberculosis was one; and stone, catarrh, haemorrhoids, fistulae, and herniae were very frequent. Juvenal satirises a fat Lydian woman who offered to treat the common feminine sterility; Cascellius did a thriving business in drawing and filling carious teeth; Rome was notorious for (?) "winged scapulae"; and Soranus busied himself with the artificial feeding of infants, and deplored the frequency of rickets, as expressed by knock-knees and bandiness. Girls wore tight stays from seven or eight years of age, so as to raise the hips fashionably into relief, and Terentius blames the mothers for the round backs, sloping shoulders, and flat chests produced by their efforts at "slimming." Anyone not thus deformed to the fashionable model was the despair of her friends, and was nicknamed "the pugilist" by critical matrons! Compare Rome of the second century with Queensland of the twentieth!

The smaller cities aped the conventions of Rome, and their increasing ill-health, as preventive medicine began to be neglected for the spectacular clinics of

pseudopractitioners, amply emphasised Varro's comment that "God made the countryside, but man made the towns."

Popular demands inevitably provoke political solicitude where there is any pretence of representative government. We see it everywhere, everyday.

Look at Ourselves

Let us think for a moment of the situation in Queensland, and indeed in Australia. From 1860 until 1934, the birthrate per thousand of the population fell from 43 to 17 per thousand. The greatest falls in any ten-year period were between 1890 and 1900 when the rate fell from 35 to 27.3, and in 1920 to 1930 when the rate fell from 25.5 to 19.9. One of these periods followed the great financial depression from 1886 to 1893; the other followed the war of 1914-18.

But the actual reproduction rate of mothers is particularly interesting because the so-called net reproduction rate is the rate of replacement. For every hundred lost, 100 must be born or the race must decline. In 1911 the figure was 154; in 1921, it was 138; in 1931 it was 104; and by 1934 it had reached the low figure of 94. During the last two or three years there has been a slight artificial increase owing to wartime marriages, but as Karmel has shown, this cannot be maintained. The forecast by Mr. Gordon Bruns of Melbourne University in 1943 is as follows—

> "If there is no radical change in the long-term decline of the fertility, the maximum population of Australia is likely to be between 7,500,000 and 8,000,000 between 1960 and 1970, with a possibility of 8,500,000 if substantial immigration is maintained."

This confirms the forecast of 8,500,000 expressed ten years ago by myself, and based upon figures provided by H. J. Exley.

When we come to compare these figures with those for other countries, we find that Queensland, though so strikingly poor in her birthrate of 19, is markedly better than England with its lowest rate of 14.6, and better than most of the countries of western and northern Europe. It is, however, among the Mongoloid races that we have to look for those large birth rates and increasing populations that threaten our security.

The historical comparison of races and nations brings us face to face at once with the question of our history in view of the birthrate problems of Japan. In 1936, repeating some previous work of 1933, I made a statement that can perhaps be repeated here because it is still appropriate—

> "As Dr. Shiroshi Nasu and Dr. Naomasa Yamasaki recently pointed out, the Japanese people were stationary and balanced against subsistence for three hundred years, until the Meiji Restoration of 1868 swept them into the life stream of Western civilisation. Food, wages, standards, all increased most rapidly, families flourished with the new availability of food; the intensive methods of contraception of the Tokugawa period were legally banned. The result was that the population of Japan proper increased in sixty years from twenty-eight millions to sixty million. It has reached saturation point. Half the population is a peasantry that farms two and a-half acres per man; by the most intense activity the area under cultivation has increased by 36 per cent., the production by 48 per cent. But the standard of living, as represented by the consumption of rice per head, has risen by 60 per cent.; 20 per cent. of that staple crop is now imported, and Japan is realising to the full both the force of the "law of diminishing returns" and the significance of the dictum that as the technique of production continues to improve, unemployment must inevitably increase and intensify. The urbanization of her people has increased meanwhile from 30 to 50 per cent., while the population has been doubling . . . The age constitution of the population is that of England seventy years ago. There has been some revival of contraception, and for this and other reasons associated with a city environment the birthrate is lowest in the densely packed cities of Kyoto, Osaka, Tokyo, etc. . . The density of the population, however is . . . four persons to the acre of arable land, and is increasing. Birth control lags always a generation behind the problem it hopes to solve; emigration would need to reach one million a year to cope with the surplus, and emigration is no corrective. It appears inevitable that, on present figures, Japan proper will steadily increase to

a figure of 113,239,000 in 1967, at which period England and America will reach their period of stalemate and decline—and with them Australia. This is a situation to be feared both in the interests of these countries and of the world in general."

The immediate causes of a declining birthrate are rather complex. They include economic aspects, psychological aspects and physical aspects. The final factor, of course, is the psychological attitude of every individual as to the expediency of becoming a parent. Often enough his decision depends upon all sorts of circumstances which can be altered, and upon our success in altering them depends the future history of Queensland, and also of Australia.

Think, however, how complex they are. Consider what is contained in the intricate series of tendencies called urbanisation—the trend to the city. Think of the economic factors that postpone the average age of marriage among men and women both, bearing in mind that the age at marriage, other things being equal, is an absolute element in determing how many children will be borne—the younger the marriage age, the greater the number of children. Think also of the increasing employment for women for attractive wages in every industry except the most important industry in the world for women—the making of homes and the making of children. Think of such very real handicaps to the family-couple as housing difficulties, lack of domestic aids, taxation anomalies, and so forth.

I have already said that on the psychological side the outstanding factors are economic insecurity, and lack of confidence in the future. There is also the competitive influence of the social salesman who advocates socially impressive environmental standards—apartments, furniture, cars, entertainments, clothing, etc., as being essential to social status—which is the cause of what Dumont called "social capillarity."

Consider also the increasing use of contraceptives and the deliberate abortions which reach an estimated minimum of 26,000 per year in Australia and a probable figure of 45,000, and, over all, think of that disillusionment and frustration that are so common in a city population faced only with a monotonous succession of days filled with uninteresting labour.

In the Brisbane hospital alone some 700 cases of abortion are treated each year, and they are not in young girls seeking a desperate remedy for a desperate situation; six to every one of these are in married women with two or more children.

Finally there is some experimental evidence and a considerable amount of clinical observation that suggests an increasing infertility among young people due, it would seem, to faulty nutrition, and faulty balance in those ductless glands that are the timers of the pace-makers of the body.

And now, having said all these things—I will not weary you with the numbers of them though there are hundreds of figures to support every item that I have mentioned—let me say that the decline of the population is really intended as Nature's solution of some of our difficulties. Every civilisation that has existed before our own has failed to get past this terrific testing time when it reached it.

Where a period of great wealth with mass production—the mass production of the slaves in ancient Rome: the mass production of machines in our own age—greatly increases the number of things that one can buy, and the desire that one has to buy them, and where one machine does the work of a hundred men, people consciously and unconsciously begin to take those steps towards reducing the number of men that fit the new circumstances. A decline in population, therefore, is Nature's way of reaching a new level, a new stage of equilibrium. But meanwhile, all the nations of the world are contending for first place in the markets of the world—it is "The Era of Contending States" that I mentioned—and those who lead the way in the increase of population, in the building up of science, and in the capture of trade, are the first also to reach stalemate and to begin to go downhill unless they can make up in quality what their population lacks in quantity, as numbers lessen.

At the present time, Queensland, Australia, the west European nations and those of North America, are all dwindling in numbers. The Asiatic races are still increasing—they are in the first wave of population overgrowth—"the Augustan Age"—that is associated with the prosperity brought by the machine. In overcrowded Europe the fall of the birthrate and the other phenomena obvious in the adverse vital statistics

are all working, as I pointed out in 1933, towards the correction of the disparity between numbers, production and consumption—a desirable solution if it does not mean, as it so frequently has done, a loss of their frontiers and their culture before the onrush of other more primitive races. But that decline in the birth-rate and in population which helps them to solve their social problems is as obvious in Queensland and in Australia also to-day. Here it operates not towards security but towards disaster, for we cannot preserve our frontiers unless we can effectively occupy the lands we claim, and we are working against time.

Australia's Opportunity

If, however, we can actively meet this problem, if we can apply the lessons of history to the solution of the problems of our own white race, if we can offer to our people developmental opportunities on which to base their confidence and their pride, we may be the first nation that ever solved the witch's problem of how to stabilise a diminishing race so that the balance of survival was kept level between quantity of population and quality of population. It would be indeed a high destiny for this land.

It is too, I think, the responsibility and privilege of every cultural society so to act as to build up that pride in country and achievement on which progress and confidence in the future are based. Professor Duhig has mentioned our new pride in our country and our men. Let us seize the opportunity and use it.

In 1842, J. Stephen, of the British Colonial Office, expressed himself thus in an official communication sent to this country—

> "I believe that the occupation of the northern shores of New Holland will ultimately be essential to the prosperity of our settlements to the southward, because, as population and wealth increase in the pastoral districts, it will be necessary to explore new sources for the investment of capital accumulated there. To complete the greatness of the Australian nation it will be necessary that they should have a greater variety than at present of climate, soils, products and exports. It is also necessary that they should secure harbours to

the north and north-west. A belt of colonies drawn round the coast will give us the absolute and undisputed possession of the interior."

This statement is as true now as it was then, and every financial crisis—particularly those of 1842, 1893, and 1930—has increasingly confirmed it, while the development of commercial aviation, the awakened interest of Asia in world commerce, and the present war, have added to it most tremendous significance.

I firmly believe, and I ask you for this year, to take as your guiding thought, the fact that if Queensland, by a reawakening of her pioneer spirit can take advantage of the opportunities obtaining throughout all eastern and south-eastern Asia, she will write her name large upon the history of the world, and that if she cannot do so within the next century, her name, and even her memory, will inevitably be expunged by the Great Recorder.